DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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Hitler's Generals Draw Large Pensions

"Compensation for Denazification" Costs Millions

More than one thousand of Hitler's generals and field marshals are drawing full pensions in West Germany today, according to statistics published on February 18th by the West German Social Democratic Press Service.

The statistics were published by the press service in answer to charges made recently by members of the West German Government that compensation to nazi victims was threatening to unbalance the budget.

The press service pointed out that in the current year the following sums were devoted to various forms of pensions and compensation arising from World War Two:

Pensions for wounded soldiers etc, including compensation paid to war prisoners: 3945 million marks.

Pensions for nazi officials and professional soldiers removed from office in the post-war denazification: 1371 million marks.

Restitution for victims of nazism: 945 million marks.

The press service pointed out that the very highest pension which could be paid to a victim of nazism, which was granted in very few cases, amounted to 600 marks monthly. The highest pension which could be granted to a nazi State Secretary who had been removed from office as a denazification measure was 2700 marks monthly, more than four times as much. Hitler's Field Marshals get a monthly pension of 2500 marks, while a crippled soldier gets a maximum of 320 marks.

The Social Democratic Press Service gave the following statistics of leading nazi officials who are today drawing very large pensions from the West German state:

State Secretaries — 15

Chief Judges in nazi courts — 7

High ranking civil servants — 1089

Top-ranking nazi officers drawing full pensions are:

Field Marshals and full generals — 75

Lieutenant Generals — 120

Major Generals — 800

Colonels — 1725

In addition to these highest-ranking nazi pensioners, all of whom receive pensions which enable them to live in great comfort and run their own cars, there are no fewer than 124,164 lesser official removed from office during denazification who receive very handsome compensation.

The Social Democratic Press Service summed up its conclusions as follows: "The hierarchy of Hitler's Reich has come out of the war much better off than their victims who suffered in the concentration camps and on the battle-fields".

CONFEDERATION PLAN — MORE DETAILS

A confederation between the two existing German states is the only path to German reunification, Walter Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, reiterated in an interview with a West German newspaperman, published on February 16th.

Mr Ulbricht, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, suggested in the interview with the leading liberal "Sueddeutsche Zeitung" that the first step towards such a confederation would have to be agreement between East and West Germany on the banning of atomic weapons in both parts of Germany, and steps towards the withdrawal of foreign troops from German territory.

Turning to the question of the form the confederation should take, Mr Ulbricht said:

"You have submitted a series of questions on the procedure and the formation of such a confederation, its organisational and juridical basis, and so on. I believe that we shall find it easy to reach agreement on these technical and juridical problems once we have settled the basic questions . . .

"How can we envisage this question in a practical sense? It would be necessary for a start to conclude a treaty between the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic on the creation of a confederation. In West Germany there are still people who think that the German Democratic Republic should be absorbed by West Germany. Some people in West Germany attempt to conceal this policy under the slogan of 'personal contacts', and propose that there should be

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CONFEDERATION PLAN — MORE DETAILS

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technical discussions on postal and telegraph services and so on. This is nothing but an attempt to find ways of undermining the German Democratic Republic. It is clear that such persons will have to have their teeth drawn.

"The conception of an annexation of the German Democratic Republic will have to be abandoned; every citizen of the German Democratic Republic who wants peaceful reunification will give this reply to all these 'technical' proposals: We admire technology, but first of all we should like to know whether you are in favour of the creation of an atom-free zone and in favour of the policy of understanding through the creation of a confederation of the two German states. When the confederation is in formation both sides will have the right to submit all questions which they consider relevant.

Impose Social Order?

"The West German Government and its supporters claim that we intend to impose our social order on West Germany through confederation. We have never thought this. But on the other hand we know that the West German Government undertakes subversive activity against the German Democratic Republic. For this reason we think it advisable that for a start there should be no independent state power standing above both states: this will prevent any possibility of one German state predominating over the other German state.

All-German Bodies

"Naturally we shall need All-German bodies, but for a start these bodies should have no executive power of their own: they should have mainly consultative and recommendatory powers. That is to say, an All-German Council could be established, composed of representatives of the governments and parliaments in both parts of Germany. This council could recommend to the two governments measures designed to bring the two German states together step by step.

"It is clear that this council would not be an All-German Government, but given good will on both sides it could smooth the way for the formation of an All-German Government.

"You ask how long the confederation stage might be expected to last. This will depend entirely on the working of the All-German Council, on the readiness of the two governments to reach an understanding, and last but not least on the cooperation of the entire German people, particularly the working class and its organisations . . .

"The most urgent tasks of the All-German Council would be the basic national tasks already mentioned: that is to say securing peace for the German people and for Europe, encouragement of the unity of our nation, and the restoration of democracy in West Germany.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic has already proposed that the All-German Council should discuss and propose a series of measures bringing the two German states together and preparing for their final amalgamation. There could be agreements in the field of economic cooperation, customs and currency questions, transport, questions connected with the status of Berlin, the draining of the 'espionage swamp' in West Berlin, easing of the traffic position inside Berlin, and so on . . .

Extension of Socialism

"You have posed the question as to the extension of our socialist achievements to West Germany. This is based on a misunderstanding. We do not propose that our People's Democratic order and socialist achievements should be transferred to West Germany at the time the confederation is concluded.

"The workers themselves and their trade unions, and the broad masses of the toilers will decide for themselves which achievements shall finally be introduced in West Germany. We see that the workers in West Germany study our achievements with great interest, and that more and more of them are learning the lessons of history.

"We do not believe that it is possible that the confederation would imply for West Germany a jump from a clerical-militarist authoritarian state to a People's Democracy. We are convinced however that the workers, the peasants and the liberal circles in West Germany want to force a change in West Germany in the direction of a parliamentary democracy. This implies overcoming the remainders of fascism, and the removal of the militarists from the positions of power, as well as the creation of guarantees that there should be no imperialist policy any longer in West Germany.

"In the German Democratic Republic we shall work in such a way that the German Democratic Republic becomes a pattern for the workers of West Germany . . .

"I should like to express my personal opinion that the question of the abolition of capitalism has been on the agenda in highly-industrialised Germany since the First World War. Those who do not understand this today will understand it tomorrow.

Elections

Turning to the question of elections throughout Germany, Mr Ulbricht stated:

"The unification of the two German states in a united democratic Germany will not be simply one act, but a continuing process. It would be mere speculation to name a date for elections. It will be possilble to hold such elections when the time is ripe. That will come about when the two German states have approached each other so closely that there can be no danger that one state intends to press the other against the wall, and when, in addition, the conditions for really free and democratic elections have been created in West Germany.

Foreign Supervision

"Anyone who proposes that such elections should be supervised by foreigners gives a slap in the face to our national dignity. The proposal was made not long ago that All-German elections should be supervised by the representatives of Pakistan, Israel or the Philippines. We don't need lessons in democracy from such states. If we hold All-German elections, we Germans will know how to decide what we have to do.

"The All-German Council created by the Confederation will have plenty of opportunity to settle questions of the election system . . .

"We believe in the principle of secret elections. They must be democratic elections. Democracy does not just consist of putting a ballot paper in the box. It must begin with the preparations, the selection of candidates. In the German Democratic Republic we have a more progressive electoral system than in West Germany. The system at present in control in West Germany cannot be described as a democratic order, but as a militarist-clerical order. Many changes will have to be made in the West German regime."

A.R.P.— Adam Rapacki's Plan

Two Minute Summary of Atom-Free Zone Bid

Here is a two-minute summary of the birth and development of the Rapacki Plan for an atom-free zone in central Europe (you pronounce it Ra-pat-ski):

June 27th 1957: East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl proposed the two German states should renounce nuclear weapons, and that simultaneously the two states should leave eastern and western military pacts. The proposal was rejected outright by the West German Government.

October 2nd 1957: Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki told the United Nations that if the two German states would renounce nuclear weapons on their territories, Poland would do likewise. The Czechoslovak Government announced on the same date that it was willing to join the atom-free zone.

October 5th 1957: East German Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz announced full support by his government for an atom-free zone including East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

December 11th 1957: The East German Parliament proposed that the four states could constitute the atom-free zone without severing their connections with existing military pacts.

December 21st 1957: The Soviet Union announced support for the atom-free zone, and called on the USA, Britain and France to cooperate.

January 22nd 1958: East German Prime Minister Grotewohl proposed that a plebiscite should be held in East and West Germany to determine whether the two states should adhere to the atom-free zone.

February 14th 1958: Polish Foreign Minister Rapacki enlarged on the original plan, suggesting an international control system for the atom-free zone. The zone could be established by unilateral declarations of the four governments concerned, in order to overcome the difficulty that normal diplomatic relations do not exist between all four states.

February 19th 1958: The Soviet Government proposed that the big four powers should guarantee the central European atom-free zone.

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(The atom-free zone would consist of a broad belt of territory some 800 miles wide in the centre of Europe. The plan is regarded as a first step towards the relaxation of international tension: in its present from the Rapacki Plan is not linked in any way with other unresolved problems such as general disarmament, exodus from NATO or Warsaw Pact, German reunification, etc. It has so far received the whole-hearted support of three of the four states concerned; the only obstacle to its adoption is the attitude of the West German Government.)

"ECONOMIC CABINET" FOR EAST GERMANY

24-Man Body to Run Industry, Agriculture

A twenty-four-man "economic cabinet" to supervise industrial and agricultural production in the German Democratic Republic was constituted on February 19th. The establishment of the new body, which will relieve the government of day-to-day work on economic problems, was the first step in the re-organisation of the German economy which was approved by the East German Parliament on February 11th.

The new economic body, which has been created by a great expansion of the already existing State Planning Commission, is intended to plan and supervise the broad outlines of industrial and agricultural production. The plans will be put into effect by newly-created "Associations of Nationally-Owned Enterprises", the individual factories and the local authories, which have recently been granted broader powers in this respect.

One of the main aims of the reorganisation is to increase the operational independence of the various enterprises, and to ensure closer workers' participation in output.

The new economic body is headed by Bruno Leuschner, 47, who spent nine years in prison and concentration camp during the Hitler period. He has been chairman of the State Planning Commission since 1952. One of the deputy chairman of the commission is Fritz Selbmann, 58, who spent the entire Hitler period in concentration camp, and who has hitherto been one of the Deputy Prime Ministers. He has recently been publicly criticised for "overestimating the role of manager" in socialist industry.

The various departments of the State Planning Commission dealing with different branches of industry are in many cases headed by the men who hitherto held cabinet rank as ministers for the industry concerned.

Two members of the expanded State Planning Commission retain their cabinet posts simultaneously. They are Heinrich Rau, 58, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Inner German and Foreign Trade, who fought in the International Brigade in Spain and was later confined in a nazi concentration camp; and Willy Rumpf, 55, Minister of Finance, who spent five years in nazi concentration camps.

Party Reshuffle — Latest

Meetings of branches and groups of the Socialist Unity Party throughout the German Democratic Republic in the past weeks have announced support for the changes in the party leadership announced on February 7th. Resolutions were passed at these meetings condemning the "fractional activity of Schirdewan, Wollweber and others", and pledging full support for "the Central Committee and its First Secretary Comrade Walter Ulbricht".

In the course of a reorganisation following the decisions of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party, Fred Oelssner, who had been removed from membership of the Politbureau because of "offences against discipline", was relieved of his position as Deputy Prime Minister. He will in future devote himself to scientific work.

Some of the resolutions criticised the lightness of the punishment imposed upon Schirdewan and Wollweber (they were removed from the Central Committee), and called for "heavier punishment for Schirdewan, Wollweber and consorts".

You Ask – We Answer

EAST GERMAN DIPLOMATS

"You are always writing about West German diplomats who used to work for Hitler. What about East German diplomats?"

P. F., London

In the diplomatic service of the German Democratic Republic there is not one single diplomat who previously worked for the nazi foreign ministry. Here are potted biographies of some of the men who today represent East Germany at diplomatic posts abroad:

Oskar Fischer, Ambassador to Bulgaria. Born in 1923 in the German-language area of Czechoslovakia. Garment worker by trade, joined the Communist Youth Movement in 1937. After the nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia was arrested together with his father. Later conscripted into Wehrmacht. After the war he settled in East Germany, and played a prominent part in the Free German Youth movement, and later in the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Entered diplomatic service in 1955.

Richard Fischer, Ambassador to the Korean People's Democratic Republic (North Korea). Born in 1906. Carpenter by trade. Joined the Communist Party in 1930. Spent ten years in prison and concentration camp during nazi period. After the war he helped to build up the new police system in Democratic Germany.

Rudolf Helmer, Ambassador to Hungary. Born in 1914. Draughtsman by trade. Joined the Communist Party in 1931. Seven years in prison and concentration camp during nazi period. After the war he studied social science and international law, before entering the diplomatic service.

Bernard Koenen, Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. Born in 1889. Metal worker by trade. Joined Social Democratic Party in 1907, and Communist Party in 1920. During the pre-Hitler period he worked as trade union official, and as Communist representative on local and provincial councils. During the entire Hitler period he was active in the anti-nazi fight both in Germany and in the emigration, and was severely wounded. After the war he acted as a full-time official of the Socialist Unity Party before entering the diplomatic service in 1953.

Rudolf Pfuetzner, Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Born in 1910. Office worker by trade. Joined Communist Party in 1928. Seven years in prison and concentration camp during the Hitler period. After the war he worked in a leading capacity in the broadcasting service before becoming a diplomat.

Kurt Prenzel, Ambassador to Albania. Born in 1900. Metal worker by trade. Joined Communist Party in 1923. Arrested four times during nazi period. After the war he worked as a leading local government official before joining the diplomatic service in 1950.

Georg Stibi, Ambassador to Rumania. Born in 1901. Building worker by trade. Fought on the side of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919, and joined the Communist Party in 1920. Member of the International Brigade in Spain, followed by emigration in Mexico. After the war he worked as a journalist before joining the diplomatic service.

Light Sentences for Nazis

A West German court at Arnsberg has passed extremely light sentences on a group of SS men who murdered 208 Soviet civilian prisoners in the last stages of World War Two.

One of the accused, SS Military Judge Wetzling, received the highest sentence of five years imprisonment; one of his assistants was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, and the other four accused were released, although they all admitted taking part in the mass murder.

Defence attorneys pleaded that the accused had been right in staging the massacre, since the imprisoned Soviet citizens, including one two-year-old child, had been "a menace to the civilian population."

Commenting on the result of the trial, Adolf Arndt, Social Democratic member of the West German Parliament, stated: "This decision is a death blow against justice. It dishonours the German Federal Republic. Such a sentence is an encouragement to all mass murderers from Katyn to Tunis."

Nazi Judges — Read All About Them

Hundreds of nazi judges, many of them named on international war criminal lists, are back at work today in the West German courts.

Listings of these judges, showing their positions under Hitler, their positions today, and details of their criminal record are now available in English.

Copies of these pamphlets, published by the Committee for German Unity in Berlin, will be sent free to readers interested.

Orders specifying how many copies are required should be sent to:

Democratic German Report
Friedrichstrasse 167
Berlin W 8
Germany.

Soviet Troops to Go

Western press correspondents will be invited to watch tens of thousands of Soviet troops being withdrawn from the German Democratic Republic in the near future. This was announced by General M. V. Sacharov, commander of the Soviet troops in Germany, in the course of an interview with the East German news agency, published on February 18th.

General Sacharov said that a total of 41,000 Soviet soldiers, organised in two mechanised divisions, one anti-aircraft division and other smaller units, would be withdrawn shortly. They would return to the Soviet Union with their equipment, and there be demobilised. This latest withdrawal would mean that the total strength of Soviet troops in Germany had been reduced by nearly 100,000 men in the past three years.

New Soviet Ambassador to Berlin

M. G. Pervukhin has been appointed as new Soviet Ambassador to the German Democratic Republic, it was announced in Moscow on February 20th. He replaces G. M. Pushkin, who was withdrawn from the post early in January to take up another appointment.

Before his appointment as ambassador Mr Pervukhin was chairman of the State Committee for Economic Relations with Foreign Countries. He is a candidate member of the Presidium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

EAST GERMAN BALLET SCHOOL

By Mary Wolfard

Beauty is one of the many things that have to be produced to meet the needs of society. But the production of beauty is not so simple as it looks.

Take ballet for example. When the dancers come lightly across the stage like cartwheeling leaves before the autumn wind, or landing softly as a cat after a high spring, this is because years of study practice and work have polished a natural aptitude into graceful movement.

This came home to me today as I watched the fifth year pupils at the National Ballet School in East Berlin at the barre. The teacher, a ballet dancer with many years of stage experience, moulded the movement of these young girls by example, by a prod here, a push there and by grasping their limbs to move them around as if they were the arm of an articulated desk lamp. The personality differences in these girls which came out so clearly in their arabesques and pas de Bourré showed that her aim in teaching was not merely to add something to the students, but to take advantage of and to develop what was there already. Beautiful as the human body in movement can be, it can also be awfully ugly without adequate training.

The National Ballet School was set up in 1951 in part of a former imperial palace off the Unter den Linden. As there had been no ballet to speak of in Germany for years, it was really a question of breaking new ground, of creating dancers from scratch and without the benefit of tradition. In an art which cannot by its nature be written down, but only handed on from one artist to another, much as are the epics of bards in an illiterate society, this was and is quite a problem. But it is being tackled vigorously, and to judge from the future ballerinas whom I saw today, with some success.

There are about a hundred pupils at this state school, approximately two-thirds being girls. Between 50 and 60 per cent come from working class homes, the rest being mainly the children of office workers and the professional classes. None of the students pays fees and all clothes, including shoes, are provided free.

Students whose parents' joint incomes do not exceed 1500 marks when both are working or 1000 marks when only one is working (ie., not in the higher income brackets) receive a grant in addition which varies with family income and study year between 95 and 156 marks a month. There are also some special additional grants for brilliant students.

Pupils of the National Ballet School in East Berlin practice

Students can live in an inexpensive hostel and get very cheap subsidised meals. Their health, of over-riding importance to dancers, is closely watched and, along with all other students here, they come under the state medical scheme which covers everything from massage to a major surgical operation. The significance can best be grasped if taken in conjunction with a statement by Arnold Haskell, the noted British ballet expert, that "in England . . . scarcely anything is understood about a dancer's health, which ruins more careers than any other single factor."

The students enter the National Ballet School when they are 14 — late by British standards — and the school's director told me they hope to alter this in the not too distant future. The reason for this is that an earlier start would, it is felt, deprive the child of an adequate general education, so that with the load of specialised dancing lessons and so on the child would never be able to matriculate. So when the child comes to the ballet school, she — it's mostly she — has a reasonable general education. This is built upon and in addition to dancing, National Ballet School students learn German grammer and literature, French, Russian, history, history of music and the dance, history of art, aesthetics and anatomy.

So far as dancing itself is concerned, the basic work is in classical ballet dancing, but modern dancing is not neglected. Historical and character dances are also taught as well as a certain amount of Spanish and Hungarian dancing.

The National Ballet School does not train teachers. It teaches solely for the stage and every graduate of this school, and of course of the provincial ballet schools, is sure of a job. The school likes its pupils to go to the smaller theatres outside Berlin because the State Opera and the Comic Opera Houses in the capital have such large ballet companies that beginners have far less opportunity for diversity than in the smaller provincial theatres. But the large number of flourishing theatres outside Berlin in Leipzig, Dresden, Schwerin, Weimar, Halle, Magdeburg and so on furnish a constant demand for trained dancers. When they leave the school at 19, they will earn the equivalent of about £10 a week in the corps de ballet. A solo dancer

will earn about £ 15 to £ 25 a week and a prima ballerina more, naturally.

But this pay is on a regular salary basis. They are covered by trade union contracts. Arnold Haskell said that if dancers in Britain were covered by union contracts, there would be no ballet because any ballet company forced to pay adequate wages could not survive financially.

But the phenomenon of the poorly paid dancer employed for a few months to be followed by no job and no income was brushed away here in the German Democratic Republic along with the junkers and other social parasites. This has been possible not only because the theatre is generously subsidised by the state but also because more people are going to the theatre, the opera, the ballet and concerts than ever before in German history.

HELPING PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

How East German Commission System Works

Various ways of helping private enterprise to link up with planned socialist economy have been introduced in the German Democratic Republic. Agricultural production cooperatives on the land, craftsmen's production cooperatives and state participation in privately-owned industrial enterprises have opened up new prospects for many people and shown them how they can find a useful place under socialism.

Private shopkeepers are the latest group to be drawn into socialist development. Since the summer of 1956 arrangements have been made for shopkeepers to enter into a commissioner relationship with the state wholesale agencies. They retain their status as private traders, but have the advantage of ordering stock, selling it on commission and paying the wholesale agencies after sale. This does not appear very important at first glance; but hitherto the greatest obstacle for private shopkeepers was lack of capital. They could only buy what they could pay for and had to shoulder all risks themselves.

Many shopkeepers in all branches have already taken advantage of the new arrangements, including Wolfgang Beyer, who has a bookshop in Pillnitz in Saxony.

Pillnitz is a holiday resort near Dresden and Wolfgang Beyer had always sold a certain number of knickknacks and curios; he sold all kinds of books, too — good and bad. He had to earn a living. But he was not happy about it.

The difficulty with books was that they had to be ordered before they appeared, and this was a big risk in the case of new books. They had to be paid for a fortnight after delivery and if they did not sell he was left with them on his hands. The biggest sales in bookshops are generally during the last three months of the year, but the bookseller has to order and pay for his stock throughout the year in order to keep up to date. He needs capital for this, and Wolfgang Beyer had no capital.

He had lost everything — books, bed, clothing — during the bombing of Dresden in 1945. The first few books he bought to stock his little shop in Pillnitz after the war were not enough to earn a living with, so he also sold postcards, writing paper, pencils and so on.

Things gradually improved; book production increased enormously. But turnover in the little shop was never enough to permit Wolfgang Beyer to launch out in big purchases. It was a vicious circle, he could have sold more if he had had a bigger selection and more storage space, and he could have enlarged his shop if he had sold more books.

The wholesale book agency in Leipzig filled his orders, but they always had to be paid for fourteen days after delivery, and books which were not sold at the year's end were reckoned as property and taxed as such; so he was forced to limit his stock and to buy the books which were most likely to sell quickly.

So his book trade declined and his trippers' memento trade increased. But Wolfgang Beyer is a bookseller first and foremost, and when someone suggested he should make a contract with the Leipzig Wholesale Book Agency to sell on a commission basis, he went into the matter very carefully. His actual percentage commission on books would be smaller, but on the other hand the agency took over the payment of taxes, rent, heating, light, insurance, transport and did all the bookkeeping.

In return the agency would expect him to stock a good sample of East German book production as a whole, but the actual choice would be left to him, since he knew his customers best. The agency would take over his present stock at wholesale prices, and with this money he could pay his deposit and have capital to make a new start. He would remain sole owner of his premises and the contract could be renewed or terminated by either partner after one year.

Wolfgang Beyer thought the matter over carefully and on September 1st 1957 he finally signed his contract.

Five months later his shop was transformed. Books filled the shelves and overflowed on to chairs, tables and the floor. It was full of customers, including students from the two Pillnitz technical schools, who can order their textbooks here too.

Wolfgang Beyer can now afford to order expensive illustrated volumes which he would never before have dared to risk — and he can sell them in no time. The shop is now far too small, but he is getting a big new show window put in first; and when the room over the shop is vacated he will be able to rent it.

He can get everything he wants, from song books to the Communist Manifesto, and he works closely with the state owned bookshop on Pillnitz Market Square. They arrange book exhibitions and writers' bazaars together, Wolfgang Beyer gets window decorations free of cost from the state owned bookshop and can draw books wanted by customers from the state owned bookshop's stock. All this not only helps Wolfgang Beyer, it also helps to spread good literature amongst the people of Pillnitz. In fact, they are now buying fifty per cent more books than before.

Wolfgang Beyer is not the only bookseller to make a commission contract with the wholesalers, and they have all been able to make big improvements in a very short time. Many other shopkeepers in the shoe, textile and grocery business especial-

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BOOKS IN THE VILLAGE

By Ehm Welk

(We print below some extracts from an article on literature in the village by Ehm Welk which appeared in the January issue of the East Berlin literary monthly "Neue Deutsche Literatur". Ehm Welk, who was born in 1884, has written a number of novels and short stories about country life.)

"The special task of our writers is to enrich the new socialist literature and, in this case especially, to reflect in their works what is new in rural life" writes Ehm Welk.

"Writers should and want to be given more encouragement to further through their books, through the new socialist literature, not only the economic changes taking place in the village, but also the spiritual and mental transformation of the people as reflected in their attitude and thoughts on political and moral questions.

"What writer in the German Democratic Republic would not wish to do this? But can he, under the present circumstances? I believe that the spreading of culture, especially in country districts, is after all at the outset an educational and less of an artistic task... The repeated call by cultural organisations to writers and artists to produce more works with contemporary themes is all very well, but it should not be used to cover up faults in their own work."

There should be enough socialist novels and stories, Ehm Welk remarks, to keep readers occupied for some time to come. What is called for is a better distribution of art and literature in country districts. He quotes some figures published recently in the weekly literary paper, "Sonntag":

"In Stolpe, a village in the eastern corner of Rostock district, formerly the seat of the barons of Schwerin, today a big machine and tractor station centre with 170 employees, where the former day labourers who worked on the estate are now free and prosperous peasants... fifty-five families, from all strata of village society, frankly expressed their views about literature. Here is the result:

14.6 per cent are simply not interested in literature and do not read at all;

18 per cent 'have no time' to pay serious attention to any kind of books;

14.7 per cent read only the daily and weekly papers and illustrated magazines;

12.5 per cent only read books written at an earlier date;

14.7 per cent only read adventure, crime and love stories — old or new and without any special preference as to author;

20 per cent also read contemporary socialist literature and translations of foreign books;

5.5 per cent have also read books which deal with developments in rural life from a socialist point of view."

Ehm Welk points out that no good purpose can be served either by pandering to present low literary tastes and producing superficial, romantic stories about farm life or, on the other hand, by portraying every dispossessed big landowner as a hard faced Prussian with riding-whip and monocle, since this will get nowhere with the old-fashioned type of farm labourer who still hankers after "our old baron — who was a strict master, but a good man."

The other kind of realistic and mainly descriptive story, with lectures on punctuality by the local agronomist, arguments between progressive cooperative peasants and old-fashioned individual peasant farmers, presentation of the ideal type of party or trade union functionary and so on, will not meet the case either, he adds.

What is important if this kind of literature is to be successful is, first and last, that "the fates of human beings under changed and changing conditions on the land be depicted in an exciting and interesting socialist-realist way, so that such books really point up socialist prospects and reveal socialist aims in natural situations."

Ehm Welk than analyses the works of a number of earlier German writers on rural life and suggests that "a study of older literature about country life should be recommended to all writers, if only to get them to think about how these predecessors of theirs succeeded in making country life interesting even for townspeople... How was it possible, for instance, that such writers as Fritz Reuter, who in many of his works condemned the century-old oppression of the little man by the Junkers... found a hearing for his revolutionary language amongst the reading public of a hundred years ago? He succeeded because he clothed genuine human actions in the language of an artist and touched his readers' hearts...

"I believe that writers who want to produce successful novels and stories about changes in rural life need only the following: they must be convinced socialists, they must be clear ideologically and not be afraid to take sides, they should apply the socialist-realist method in writing and they should possess enough artistic perception to be able to avoid mere description of economic changes and innovations and to show the power of the new, and the human dignity and bright glow of a better life through the lives of real human beings, through stirring their readers' emotions, through showing a way into the future which, as the author himself believes and as he has succeeded in persuading his readers, is the right way not only for the characters in his book but for everyone else too...

"If they are to have this effect today, they must be characters who — in the midst of all that is new in work and in society — live, love, laugh, suffer and die as warm-hearted and imperfect people, people learning, believing and fighting together in a new age. Such people could transform our villages. And our readers would believe in them."

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ly, have already done well on a commission basis, although there were initial difficulties in the more complicated businesses.

Commission percentages must vary, for instance, according to the amount of work involved in selling; some businesses have to deal through several wholesale agencies; and it was not always easy to determine how much a shopkeeper should pay down as deposit before the wholesale agency took over the risks. But all these businesses are now doing at least fifty per cent more business than before. They can keep a much better stock, do a much better job of catering for their customers and, perhaps most important of all, their business can be properly calculated within the state owned wholesale agencies' plans.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Perhaps I should confess to a minor vice: I like browsing through reference books. When I have a few minutes to spare in my office, I am as likely as not to leaf through Whitaker's Almanach, wondering vaguely whether anyone is really interested in noting the birthdays of the Admirals of the Fleet, and what 681 people born in Burma do for a living in Scotland.

This vice has been fed in the past week or two by the arrival of latest issue of the Statistical Yearbook of the German Democratic Republic, which is providing me with yet another excuse for putting off the onerous job of filling out my income tax return.

Massive Volume

This Statistical Yearbook, a massive volume of 683 pages, gives a huge mass of information to anyone interested: the acreage under rhubarb, for instance (848 acres, if anyone really is interested: and the acreage has been falling steadily since 1948, which may indicate a change in eating habits). Inspired by the example of rhubarb, I went on to search for spinach, but I must regretfully report that this seems to be included in "other vegetables".

Turning back a few pages, I stumbled over the details of the sports played in the German Democratic Republic. Rugger fans will be glad to hear that though rugby football is still the least popular of all the sports practiced in East Germany, it is making slow but steady progress. One year ago I was able to report to readers that 271 people were members of the rugby section of the sport organisation: the latest statistics show that the figure has grown to 300, which gives them 20 full teams if the tens-to-fourteens (there are 15 of them listed) are pressed into service.

With a little more effort, the rugby enthusiasts may overtake the people who like rolling around in Rhön wheels (301 of them), or even the bob-sledders (473). They will still have a long way to go if they want to overtake soccer in popularity: there are no fewer than 317,258 soccer players registered, by far the largest single group. Other most popular sports, in decreasing order of popularity, are gymnastics, skittles, handball, table tennis, and track sports.

But let us turn away from rhubarb and rugger for a moment, and take a look at some of the more vital figures, which show how people actually live in the German Democratic Republic. The Statistical Yearbook gives some complicated tables showing the development of cost of living, or real wages, and so on. This is always one of the most debatable subjects in any compilation of statistics: the whole thing depends upon how the cost of living index is weighted and so on: I remember reading that in France recently the government avoided having to pay increased cost-of-living allowances by rapidly and arbitrarily changing the basis on which the index was computed.

The compilers of the tables in the Statistical Yearbook are quite aware of the difficulty, and append a note indicating that it has not been possible to make full allowance for the steady rise in quality "particularly of textiles and shoes" since the difficult years immediately after the Second World War.

But here, with all due circumspection, are some of the very interesting figures on real wages in East Germany. Taking 1950 as 100, net average wages had risen by 1956 to 145. But this does not begin to indicate the rise in real wages since prices in most fields have fallen considerably since 1950. The average real wage has risen from 100 in 1950 to no less than 233 in 1956, last year for which complete statistics are available.

The change in the price structure is shown in another table, which shows that prices of an average list of 550 products have fallen from 100 in 1950 to 65 in 1956.

Anyone who mistrusts these averages can reassure himself on the next page, where there are some very conclusive figures on the consumption per head of the main foodstuffs. In 1950, consumption of meat was 22 kilogrammes per head, less than half the pre-war figure: by 1956 it was up to 43 kilogrammes. In 1950, butter consumption per head was about 5½ kilogrammes: by 1956 it was nearly 10 kilogrammes. Margarine, egg, milk and sugar consumption all went up too. The only foodstuffs of which less are being consumed today are bread and potatoes, and it is a well known fact that consumption of these goods falls as the supply of other more concentrated goods rises.

Another interesting table showing both increasing prosperity, and indirectly increasing confidence in the value of the East German mark, is that of savings. The total sum deposited at savings banks has increased from 1270 million marks in 1950 to 6062 million mark in 1956: that is a per capita increase from 69 marks to 344 marks.

But perhaps I have thrown enough statistics at you for one time: I hope you were not too bored.

How Crazy?

The following little story really belongs in the "How Crazy Can You Get?" department. It happened in the West German province of Baden-Wuerttemberg in the year 1958.

35 members of the Christian Democratic party group in the Provincial Parliament have called for the establishment of a special parliamentary commission to consider the case of the awful crimes committed by Professor Franz Kirchheimer, head of the Provincial Geological Department.

What are the crimes? Here they are in the wording of the witch-hunting parliamentarians: "That Professor Kirchheimer published such detailed facts about the uranium deposits in the Black Forest ... that this represented a real danger to the security of the free part of Germany; and that he had a scientific work published in 1957 in a nationally-owned publishing firm in Halle (East Germany)."

Reporting the case, the West German newsmagazine "Spiegel" commented on February 19th:

"The fact that there is uranium in the Black Forest has been known for a considerable time — since 1792 to be exact. The bookshops can provide anyone with more than one thousand publications dealing with uranium deposits in the Black Forest and elsewhere. The deposits in the Black Forest are negligible for the atom economy."

Turning to the second part of the charge, the "Spiegel" comments:

"Many West German scientists have their technical works published in publishing houses which happen to lie in the other half of Germany. The witch-hunters wisely kept quiet about the title of this 'dangerous' book. It is: 'Foliage in the Tertiary Epoch'."

In fact the whole thing reminds me forcibly of the unforgettable episode in 1937, when dimpled child star Shirley Temple was denounced to the Un-American Activities Committee as a Communist agent. And I did not invent this.

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